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ABSTRACT

This short booklet contains questions and answers concerning aspects of vocational-technical education, including (1) satisfying student needs through cooperative education, (2) skill and ability requirements of the cooperative teacher-coordinator, (3) economic feasibility of vocational-technical education, (4) improving rural education, (5) characteristics of a career oriented school curriculum, and (6) increasing program effectiveness through vocational followup. The publications from which the answers were drawn review and synthesize research in the field. Information about them and how to order them is included. Related documents are available as VT 014 332 and VT 014 333 in this issue. (SB)

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Answers to Questions on Vocational Education

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Cooperative Education
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Placement and Follow-up
Programs for Rural Areas

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Questions and Answers

WHAT STUDENT NEEDS ARE SATISFIED BY COOPERATIVE EDUCATION?

Cooperative education programs expose the student to the characteristic skills, duties, and practical understandings related to an occupation. He acquires a set of attitudes, rules of conduct, and interpersonal skills involving relations with fellow workers, supervisors, and clients. The cooperative education program helps build a student's self-identity as a future worker and helps him know his strengths, limitations, aspirations, and personal values. It provides an experience which will equip the student for occupational flexibility and mobility and assist him in maturing socially and psychologically. (See IN 21)

DO TEACHER-COORDINATORS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS REQUIRE SPECIAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES?

Research seems to point out that a cooperative education teacher-coordinator should be an exceptional teacher and more. The major correlates of success include a student-centered approach to teaching, insight, personal flexibility, tendencies to critical self-evaluation, and willingness to assume the role of counselor when necessary. His success also depends upon his flexibility and creativity in approaching the teaching situation, his personal dynamism, and his willingness to expend effort and energy beyond the minimum required. His success will also be contingent upon the projection of a positive, accepting, and caring attitude. In addition to these special characteristics of subject matter teachers, the role and responsibilities of a teacher-coordinator require a high degree of administrative ability and school-community relations experience and expertise. (See IN 21)

IS VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE?

Research by economists clearly indicates that education is a vital element in economic growth and that investment in education yields a relatively high rate of return both to the individual and to society. Well designed cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness studies indicate that vocational-technical education programs in public schools are a sound investment. Cost-benefit studies of manpower development and training programs reveal data that are consistent enough and the margins of benefits over cost sufficiently large to leave little doubt but that the training programs have been a good economic investment. (See IN 8)

HOW CAN OCCUPATIONS BE ANALYZED TO DETERMINE CONTENT FOR THE VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM?

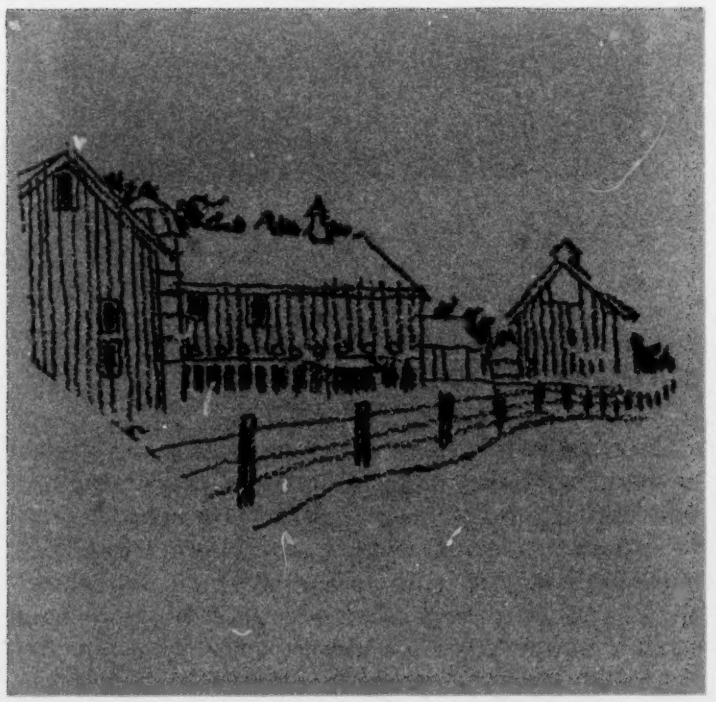
Job analysis and task analysis are two methods of determining curriculum content. The ultimate purpose of both is the same; the development of vocational curriculums geared to the needs of students so that entry-level requirements of employment positions will be satisfied. Job analysis requires the collection and interpretation of information about the work performed in the occupation. This information is needed to describe the job toward which training is directed and to provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of training as reflected in job performance. Task analysis examines a task and identifies its characteristics in terms of certain attributes which are then used to determine the knowledge and skill requirements of the job. The data from these analysis techniques are then translated into vocational curriculum. (See IN 12)

WHAT IS A CAREER ORIENTED SCHOOL CURRICULUM?

A career oriented curriculum is one designed to enable students to master the career development tasks of occupational choice, employability skills, job preparation, job entry, job adjustment. and job advancement. Career acquaintance or awareness occurs in the elementary grades by incorporating career information into the classroom activities in an attempt to enhance student learning and make subject matter relevant to the world of work. Career orientation is the focus during junior high of middle school, exposing students to a wide spectrum of occupations through discussion, films, resource persons, and field trips. During the latter junior high or early senior high years students engage in experiences designed to match their interests and abilities with career expectations. By the time the student reaches senior high school he has begun to identify career clusters of interest to him and begins more intense preparation in a job cluster or specific job. The time at which each of these sequential levels of career education occurs should be flexible to accommodate the needs of individual students. (See IN 34)

HOW DID THE EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS SECTION OF THE 1968 VOCATIONAL AMENDMENT STIMULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

The "Exemplary Programs and Projects" section of the Vocational Education Act Amendments of 1968 has enabled many state departments of vocational education to develop experimental and pilot programs of career education. Programs were designed for elementary, junior high school, junior and senior high school, senior high school, and K through 12. Several programs have also been developed exclusively for the culturally disadvantaged. These programs have widely varying approaches; for example, educational television in the junior high school for career development in Maryland, computer based guidance and career exploration systems in Michigan, "Vocational Education Curriculum Integration Project" in Kentucky, and a self-contained mobile unit for vocational and occupational counseling in Nebraska. (See IN 34)



WHAT KINDS OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES SHOW PROMISE FOR IMPROVING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS?

As in some urban areas, portions of rural America are faced with a low socioeconomic level, poorly equipped schools, inadequate vocational facilities, lack of educational materials in homes, limited contact of youth with the industrial world, and low educational level of residents. These factors are interrelated and create enormous problems in providing appropriate vocational education for rural youth. In striving for the highest quality vocational education program, school district consolidation is a solution to the problem. Another option is use of new instructional technology. Area vocational schools and residential schools may provide the needed enrollment for a comprehensive vocational program in sparsely populated communities. Advisory committees should be used in curriculum planning and evaluation. Work experience programs seem to hold great promise for vocational education, this being especially true in rural areas where equipment costs are prohibitive. A promising current recommendation is the program of basic vocational education for clusters of jobs, allowing schools to provide fewer curriculum offerings and preparing students for a broader spectrum of job opportunities, thus facilitating job mobility. (See IN 16)

HOW CAN VOCATIONAL FOLLOW-UP INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?

The follow-up of graduates of vocational education, if carefully planned and executed, can provide information to educational planners and administrators, and to future vocational-technical students. Data on how employment was obtained, geographic mobility, earnings, job stability and satisfaction, and need for continuing education are important facets of this information base. When coupled with appropriate economic analysis this information can point the way to improved decision-making by governments and institutions on questions of priority among types, levels, and fields of education and training programs, and on decisions about allocation of resources to these programs. (See IN 15)

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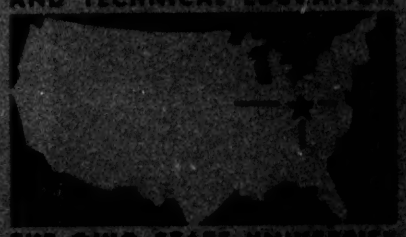

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Answers to questions in this brochure were obtained from the publications listed below. To obtain these publications, complete the order form and mail to:

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IN 34	Review and Synthesis of Information on Occupational Exploration (Available from Superintendent of Documents)	

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